

IAI8506

THE NUCLEAR DEBATE IN ITALY
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Introduction

This paper deals with the Nuclear Debate as it has developed in Italy in the post-war period. Certainly no one argues about nuclear problems in a vacuum: East-West relations, security perceptions, and foreign policy orientations, always are a conspicuous part of a nuclear debate, in Italy as elsewhere. Therefore, I hope it is no surprise if the problems that I will try to underline pertain more to the larger domain of security than to nuclear issues in a strict sense.

The Government, the parties, the media and the military are the actors of the nuclear debate. Attention is paid also to the constraints put on the actors by the Italian institutional framework.

A first thesis of this essay is that the INF issue has deeply affected the nuclear debate in Italy, dramatically raising the country's interest towards nuclear affairs. Many of the terms of the debate itself, however, are not new - as shown by a comparison with the largely forgotten 1959 controversy over the Jupiter Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles (IRBMs) deployment.

The INF story is far from its end, as highlighted by the fact that there is still an INF desk in the US-Soviet talks opened in Geneva last March. Nonetheless, other tests lie not very far ahead: the threshold between conventional and nuclear conflict (1), as well as the Strategic Defense Initiative (2) are likely to shape the post-INF debate in Nato.

As far as the nuclear threshold is concerned, another thesis of this paper is that a complete withdrawal of all the short-range nuclear weapons from Italy could be consistent with Nato's current trends on this issue. To support this assertion the paper deals at length with the conventional balance on Italy's North-eastern region.

The main conclusion drawn by this study is that, despite the new attention paid to security questions, Italy still lacks the ability to influence the allied-decision making, even though its role can be decisive in supporting allied policy. This leads to the policy recommendation of revising the country's institutional framework on defense matters, which at present is not conducive towards a well-informed and increasingly demanding security debate.

The Early Years

The first notable security debate in post-war Italy took place in 1949, when the Parliament discussed the country's membership in Nato. On that occasion, the political landscape was clearcut: the left (the Socialist and the Communists) voted against the proposed accession to the Atlantic Treaty, whereas all other parties voted to join.

In the years following that decision, Italy became involved in Nato nuclear policy. Tactical nuclear devices were first deployed in 1956, namely, Honest John short-range s/s missiles, assigned to the Southern Europe Task Force (SETAF). This allowed the Italian armed forces - under American supervision - to begin training in nuclear operations that same year. In 1957,

Atomic Demolition Munitions (ADMs) were first deployed. Between 1956 and 1958 the Italian Army's new operational doctrine of the "600" (3) series took full account of the employment of nuclear weapons in land warfare. This made it, in other words, remarkably consistent with MC-14/2, i.e. massive retaliation.

In 1958, following the December 1957 Heads of Government meeting which decided on the formation of a Nato nuclear stockpile, the Italian government agreed to field 30 Jupiter IRBMs. The following year, coming close to the actual deployment, political pressure mounted in Parliament to discuss the IRBM issue. This resulted, as the second major debate on Italian security policy after the one on Nato membership ten years before. The Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber of Deputies debated the issue for five days - from April 10th to the 14th - while the Senate devoted three days of plenary session to the question - from April 14th to the 16th. In the latter case, both the Prime Minister, Mr. Antonio Segni, and the Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr. Giuseppe Pella, took the floor.

Many events occurred at this time to broaden the scope of the debate: the first steps towards detente were being taken and the decline of traditional Cold War hardliners, like J. Foster Dulles, became apparent. In addition, Mr. Pella provoked a political uproar on the Left, declaring on April 5th in New York, that "Should my daughter run the risk of living in a world without freedom, a Communist world, I'd rather, as a father, choose the risk of the atomic bomb. And the majority of Italian parents think the same way"(4). Finally, the retirements the month before of Gen. Liuzzi, Army Chief of Staff, and Gen. Mancinelli, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, were linked to the IRBM issue (5).

In both Chambers, however, the Socialists' and Communists' harsh criticisms focussed on the question of the authority over the weapons' use and that of the political timeliness of deployment in a period characterized by a "relaxation of tensions" between the blocs. They also formally made a motion for the disclosure of the text of the Italo-American agreement on the IRBMs. On the whole, it was a comprehensive debate that left uncovered very few aspects of Italian foreign policy at that time. Wide press coverage was given to the debate, especially by the two leftist daily papers the PCI's "L'Unità" and the PSI's "Avanti!". During this same month of April, the Communists also held a number of demonstrations on a local scale against the missiles. It must be taken into account that the location of the IRBM base was not disclosed; therefore, amid various speculations ranging from Veneto to Val d'Aosta to Sardinia, protestors were often driven by the fear that the base would be in their own community.

On the issue of control over the weapons, however, the Government replied, "the future installations will be under the exclusive control of national authorities and, in any case, the Italian government's consent will be necessary for their use should the need occur" (6). The ambiguity of this statement is due to the Italo-American agreement: the "installations," that is to say the base, the personnel and the missiles were in fact Italian, whereas the warheads were in American custody. This kind of classic dual key arrangement was not revealed as such by the Government, which refused to give the Senate the text of the Italo-American accord on the grounds that "the Government does not think itself so obliged, and thinks that this should not be done for technical reasons and the secrecy necessary for the national interest" (7). According to the Government, the agreement "puts into practice a cooperation which as exactly is (intended) in the framework of the Atlantic Treaty, since it is within the limits of Art.3" (8).

The Government's answers on that occasion epitomized the constraints put on the Italian security debate by the institutional framework. On one hand, in fact, Italian membership in Nato allowed the Government to refer to a number of defense decisions as ordinary measures, stemming from the Treaty itself. On the other hand, the Italian Constitution saw the country's defense affairs as something to be protected as much as possible from political and parliamentary conflicts. Accordingly, the President of the Republic is the Chief of the Armed Forces, and also the Chairman of the Supreme Defense Council (Consiglio Supremo di Difesa, CSD) which was set up in 1950. The Prime Minister, the Foreign, Defense, Interior and various other Ministers, the Chiefs of Staff, plus anyone the President chooses to include are also members of the CSD. All major security decisions in Italy have been made by this Council since its formation. Thus, the only relevant role the Parliament has in shaping defense policy is the annual Budget discussion. Furthermore, the post-war governments followed a constant pattern of Italy's history: they adopted a concept of military secrecy so pervasive as to inhibit outsiders - congressmen, journalists, scholars - any relevant discussion on defense matters. It should be noted that such information as the dislocation of military bases throughout the country or the number of effectives are classified. All these factors can partly explain the scarce attention paid to security issues by most Italian politicians.

While the limits set by the institutional framework are still in place, other elements of the Jupiters' debate were bound to recur two decades later: attention to détente and East-West relations; the issue of control over nuclear weapons; emphasis on some elements of the Atlantic Treaty by an opposition party (PSI in 1959, PCI in 1979). At that time, in fact, the Socialists gradually came to accept Italy's membership in Nato, while at the same time underlining both the defensive purpose of the Treaty and its limited geographical scope. Furthermore, the PSI "as it found difficult to base itself directly on Nato, it preferred to publicize the merits of European integration, the EEC and in the final analysis also European defense" (9). It is interesting to note the first signs of this evolution, in that same 1959 debate on the IRBMs. A prominent Socialist figure of the time Senator Emilio Lussu declared on that occasion: "the Italian Socialist Party ... made an effort to induce the Government to limit the area of our Atlantic commitments and to reduce the role of our armed forces to a purely defensive one" (10).

In the early 1960s Italy underwent a complex political change towards a Center-Left formula - i.e. the inclusion of the PSI in the Government - which attracted much political and public attention. Over the same years, the Multi Lateral Force (MLF) was on the allied agenda. Italy took a supportive, although very cautious stance: particular attention was paid to the reactions of the major Allies to the US proposals - especially to those of West Germany. In short, there was a contrast between the relative enthusiasm displayed by the military (11), and the prudent diplomacy of the Government, which was careful not to disturb the new coalition with potentially divisive security problems. However, the disactivation of the IRBM base in 1962 failed to receive any particular degree of public attention. For more than a decade discussion on nuclear issues in Italy will fail to reach the saliency of the Jupiters' case.

Over the same years, the Army's new operational doctrine of the "700" series (1963-70) overemphasized those nuclear elements which were already in the "600" series. An Italian Air Force General, Nino Pasti, wrote in 1969 of the "700" doctrine: "It's really an unjustifiable act of self-denigration that Italy itself proposes a doctrine which could mean the atomization of Italy, given the enemy's reaction, and far in advance of an enemy's threat to our borders" (12). In short the sixties saw the Italian military going astray, from

the general Allied strategic debate: that same period marked, in fact, the gradual abandonment of the MCF and the transition from massive retaliation to MC-14/3, i.e. flexible response.

Italy's admission to the nuclear club of permanent Nuclear Planning Group (NPG) members (USA, UK, FRG and Italy) was the salient event of the 1960s. The new nuclear body was established in December 1965, and its first meeting was held in Washington in April 1967. Furthermore an Italian - Manlio Brosio - was the Secretary General of Nato from 1964 to 1971, while the above mentioned General Pasti was deputy Saceur for nuclear affairs. Apart from the first meeting - briefed and chaired by McNamara - Brosio also acted as NPG chairman until he resigned as Secretary General. To this relative prominence there does not seem to have been a corresponding notable activity: "Though accorded formal equality of status as a permanent member of the NPG, Italy possessed nothing like the military and political influence of its major European allies over alliance policy...any attempt to increase national participation in the military aspects of nuclear planning would amount to very little in substance....Given the weaknesses of the Italian Ministry of Defense, Italian initiatives have tended to be discounted anyway, and any impact that Italian spokesmen might have had has depended on the presence from time to time of particularly strong minded individual representatives" (13).

More by virtue of size than for any other reason Italy was forced by the circumstances to try to take up the role that had belonged to France before 1966. While a large part of the military leadership displayed backwardness in nuclear problems (see the above "700" case), public opinion largely ignored these issues. Again the political leadership of the country - the majority as well as the opposition - was mainly concerned with internal affairs. This is true also with regard to the armed forces, which were capable of attracting attention almost exclusively in domestic terms: problems of loyalty, resources, etc.

From the Seventies to the Eighties

Following this pattern, the seventies brought more changes. Among them was the emergence of a group of civilian experts trained either in international relations or in physics. The seeds were spread actually in the mid-sixties: the first meeting of ISODARCO (14) took place in 1966; the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI, Institute for International Affairs) was founded in 1965. The impact of such intellectuals on policy-making and public opinion has been, however, rather limited ever since. The figure of an outside, non-bureaucrat specialist providing advice to MPs or Cabinet members is largely unknown in Italy. On the other hand civil servants, party spokesmen and professional journalists have neither the training (15), nor a sharp interest in security, while showing a remarkable degree of distrust for outsiders. Clearly public's attitude is affected by this state of affairs: even the basic terminology of security is far from having roots in the media. Talking about nuclear problems in Italy often means a difficult choice between obscurity and oversimplification. It's no surprise that the latter tends to prevail: both supporters and opponents of the Cruise deployment, for example, tend to assume that all that is involved is the countering of the Soviet SS-20s (16).

Despite these limits, on the whole, the seventies in Italy marked a period of renewed attention to the armed forces. In this past decade new issues arose, such as: a huge reorganization for the three services, and an expensive 15 year modernization program. In the meantime, the security debate shifted towards the

so-called new threats coming from the Mediterranean. Italian forces took part in peacekeeping operations - like those in Sinai and Lebanon - outside the UN framework, sharpening the perception that Italy has a role to play towards the south, and apart from Nato.

Obviously the quality of the discussion, however intense it may be, is limited by what I called the lack of an appropriate language and knowledge. Debates tend to focus on vaguely defined threats on one hand, and on abstract levels of financial resources needed by the forces on the other. It's still unusual to find discussions about realistically assessed threats and related missions to be accomplished by the services, given the available budget.

With regard to nuclear issues, the seventies had many notable events, first of all, Italy's ratification in 1975 of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Noting that Italy was "just touched" by the debate on the MF and on an independent nuclear deterrent, Stefano Silvestri wrote, "some rather unimportant traces were left in certain sectors of the administration, particularly in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defense and in the body responsible for nuclear energy the National Committee for Nuclear Energy (CNEN), where a number of bureaucrats have more or less openly supported the idea of national nuclear deterrent under a 'European' cover. These survivals of nationalism were, however, politically defeated with Italy's ratification of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1975 and afterwards more or less disappeared" (17).

Another new feature brought by the seventies is the changed Italian role in NATO. Italy lost the Secretary General's post, the Deputy SACEUR post and the special status of permanent NPG member: in November 1979 all the thirteen countries interested in this body decided to take part permanently. At a military level, the "700" series was superseded by the "800" and the "900" series - currently in force - which have reestablished a certain coherence with Flexible Response.

The relative loss of prestige does not mean necessarily a less important role. On the contrary, ever since West Germany put forward the requirement of non-singularity - which means it does not intend to be the only European continental country to deploy new nuclear weapons - Italy has found itself in a key position.

Decision making on nuclear issues is nowhere a purely technical matter. Rather, it tends to be a combination of military and political considerations. In such a combination, domestic and international affairs tend heavily to the political side. In this sense Italy is no exception, apart from the fact that the military considerations are negligible, while the political ones are overwhelming.

This attitude has largely determined Italy's stance in Nato's major nuclear decisions in the last decade. Italy's reaction, for example, to the proposed Enhanced Radiation Weapons (ERWs) deployment was cool because of a combination of domestic and international factors. The two main protagonists (USA and FRG) were reluctant to take the lead in an ERW decision. The Italian Government, therefore, should have assumed such a leading role - which would not only have been unusual, but also impossible, given the Communist Party's opposition to the neutron bomb. In 1976-79, in fact, Communist support was vital for the Christian Democrat's cabinet. Eventually, the administration could not meet German demands of non-singularity, thus contributing to the final withdrawal of the ERW proposal.

It's worth noting that neither the Government nor the political parties discussed the issue in terms of relations between neutron bomb and Italian

security. The Communists, too, argued mainly in general terms, such as ERW and the arms race, and ERW as an inhumane weapon. There were also references to ERW and the nuclear threshold, but only as far as discussions held abroad (especially in the FRG) found their way into the Italian media.

The driving forces behind Italy's 1979 decision were similar. First, the Government promptly seized the opportunity to use the Italian support as a bargaining chip in its relations with the major allies: "Because of the exclusion of Italy from the Guadeloupe Summit, bolstering Italy's role in the Alliance became a leading concern. In fact Cossiga (Francesco Cossiga was Italy's prime minister in '79.ed) had reportedly told associates that if Italy cooperated on LRTNF, he expected no more Guadeloupes. Whether by coincidence or design, the June 1980 Economic Summit took place in Venice" (18).

Secondly, the Socialist Party supported INF also in order to isolate the Communists - who were already back in opposition - and to legitimize itself as the only leftist force in Italy with a clearly Atlanticist stance. Thirdly, the Communist Party chose a soft and realistic attitude, whereby proposing a delay in any Italian decision and calling for immediate USA-USSR INF talks. Significantly, however, the PCI shared the perception of the SS-20s as a threat, stressing the need for a rough military parity between the blocs; this signal of independence from Moscow and loyalty to Nato has been widely recognized (19).

In the end, each major actor got his own reward: only few months afterwards, for instance, the Socialists joined a new center-left coalition. A Socialist figure, Mr. Lelio Lagorio, was sworn in as Minister of Defense. In 1979, and again in November 1983 - with the arrival at Sigonella Air base of the first 16 cruise missiles - Italy met German conditions (20), thus facilitating Nato's chances to carry out its critical INF decision.

These four years have revolutionized the Italian attitude towards nuclear issues. The foreign policy section of any major medium was filled almost daily with news and editorials on the INF controversy and the Geneva talks. Figures on the East-West military balance, description of weapons' characteristics, realities and nightmares of the nuclear era became for the first time familiar to the country's public opinion. The Government had to answer hundreds of parliamentary questions on nuclear matters - an unprecedented level for Italy. A large peace movement appeared, which set new records of mass demonstrations and, more important, cut the political landscape along new lines. In a country where politics has always been dominated by party affiliation, the peace movement drew support from several forces: liberals, christians, socialists, communists, none of whom could confidently claim a recognized leadership.

A demand for expertise in security affairs emerged: out of 23 Italian-based research-centers listed in a recent Directory Guide of European Security and Defense Research (21), as many as 10 were founded in 1979 or afterwards.

Notwithstanding these changes, there is still a long way to go in Italy as far as nuclear issues are concerned.

The first Italian Defense White Book published in 1977, has just a single page out of 370 where the role of nuclear weapons in Nato defense is mentioned.

It's worth noting that while there is a reference to the nuclear threshold, this seems to indirectly support the real essence of the book, which is a call for higher military expenditures. Stronger Italian forces, it seems to imply, can avert the risk of early nuclear involvements. But nowhere the reader can find any mention of a nuclear stockpile in Italy.

In 1980, the then Minister of Defense, Mr. Lelio Lagorio, presented the Parliament with the main lines of his policy. Again the role of nuclear weapons was played down. The only reference to them in the document is made with regard to flexible response, which is summarized in a few lines. This time, however, the Minister was more explicit about the nuclear threshold: "Italy still has to fulfill many of its commitments to strengthen its conventional forces. The lack of effectiveness of conventional forces makes, in fact, the nuclear threshold lower, since it reduces the ability of the country to resist aggression, in the meantime making it dependent on others as far as its own security is concerned" (22).

In December 1984, Mr. Giovanni Spadolini, Secretary of the Republican Party and currently Defense Minister, presented the 1985 Defense White Book, the second in Italian history. Attention to nuclear weapons was as scant as in the previous documents: mainly a rough synthesis of the reasons that led Nato to adopt MC-14/3. Among the nuclear weapons deployed in Italy, the cruise missiles only are mentioned. Again the main focus of the document is another one: what the Minister calls "local threats" to Italian security in the Mediterranean, threats that are not going to involve the Alliance, according to Mr. Spadolini.

If one compares the Italian approach to similar public statements in other non-nuclear Nato countries, conclusions are easy to draw. In The Netherlands, for example, the Queen's address on Defense Policy for the FY 1979, contained a separated 23-page annex about nuclear arms (23). In the White Paper 1983 "The Security of the Federal Republic of Germany", Flexible Response is discussed at length in a key chapter on Nato's strategy; there is a special paragraph on "The Nuclear Forces" and another about "Criticism of the Existence and Part Played by Nuclear Weapons".

Apart from their activity within the Parliament or the Government, it is unusual for Italian parties to issue statements on defense policy. Once in a while, single politicians point out what is no more than their own personal opinion. It may happen, therefore, that in the same party very different views coexist: while Bartolo Ciccardini - DC, Deputy Minister of Defense - calls for a debate on a national nuclear arsenal (24), the Hon. Manfredi Bosco - head of the DC Department for State and Institutions - believes that "we should reach a situation where only conventional forces are in place (balanced on a lower level) together with submarine-based nuclear forces" (25). As far as the peace movement is concerned, there is a gap between its capability to mobilize people on one hand, and its ideas about deterrence, the military balance and East-West relations on the other. Any attempt to find such ideas in a written form is further complicated by the fact that the movement has neither think-tanks, nor stable coordination among its numerous components. Anyway, one of its recognized leaders, PdUP MP Luciana Castellina, calls for a nuclear free-zone from Portugal to Poland, and is against P2s, Cruise missiles and SS-20s as well. Besides, she thinks that "given the capabilities new weapons have, the deterrence theory has already crumbled" (26).

The biggest single political force of the Italian peace movement is the Italian Communist Party. Its opposition to INF deployment has been rather soft, since 1979. While the Party's international policy gives prominence to peace and détente, this does not seem to be supported by a robust intellectual effort. Very broad statements predominate among the Communist leaders on these matters. Italy's membership in Nato is accepted in principle by the Party, but very little is known about how the Communists would manage, once in power, concrete problems of Italian security within the allied framework. In a recent meeting on "Cultures and Strategies of Pacifism," however, Mr. Aldo D'Alessio - PCI spokesman on defense matters - stated that "the Italian Government should

declare itself inclined to ask for a discussion, within Nato, of nuclear defense strategy, and inclined to affirm, in principle, the exclusion of a decision of nuclear first strike ('primo colpo'), extremely dangerous for Veneto and Friuli in particular" (27). Statements like this give hardly a clue about the actual content of the Communists' security policy.

Outside the more political framework, diplomats and military people also deal with security problems. In the October 1982 issue of the Nato Review, Ambassador Vincenzo Tornetta, then Permanent Representative of Italy to the Atlantic Council, discussed "Nato Nuclear Strategy and No First Use." He wrote that "to make ready more effective conventional forces is a positive goal, since it will be able to enhance deterrence credibility and to raise the nuclear threshold; in the meantime we should avoid initiatives - like adoption of no first use - capable on the contrary to raise the likelihood of a conventional war" (28). This is the most explicit statement in a piece generally characterized by a very cautious style.

On the military side, the publication of a long study on "Nato's Strategic Concept for the Nineties in Light of the Possible Evolution of Flexible Response" (29) is noteworthy. The authorship of this work is the collective responsibility of top officials from the three services, plus civil servants and career diplomats in the framework of Centro Alti Studi Difesa (CASD - Center for Advanced Defense Studies). It is clearly only a theoretical exercise, which is, however, indicative of the current ideas of the Italian military on the nuclear threshold.

On the whole it is a call for a stricter integration between conventional and nuclear operations: "Two different strategies, a conventional one and a nuclear one cannot coexist...they should be harmonized". What is needed, according to the authors, is "the elaboration of a truly operational tactical and theater nuclear doctrine...whereby nuclear weapons...are conceived...as truly a combat means to thwart and defeat the aggressor." Somewhat surprisingly, however, the study advocates "the withdrawal, or at least a reduction in number, of the less controllable nuclear systems, particularly of short-range ones, which could be involved in conventional operations and induce early nuclear use."

The Conventional Balance in the North-Eastern theatre

For the nuclear debate in Italy, it is easy to avoid being too abstract. All that is needed is to take into account that a substantial number of nuclear weapons are deployed in Italy. Evidently, they are deemed necessary in order to carry out the military missions assigned to Italian forces in their sector of Nato defense. I have in mind the Italian North-Eastern theater; in the Mediterranean, there is the Sixth Fleet - to which Italy provides bases and facilities - which has its own nuclear missions (30). Leaving aside the Mediterranean as so complex an issue as to merit its own review, the question here is: to what extent are nuclear deployments, whose rationale can be traced back to the Fifties, still valid today? In the early years of the post-war period, the Italian forces were clearly in bad shape: ill-trained and equipped mainly with US MAP matériel, they could be considered at that time little more than a nuclear trip-wire. More importantly, the Italo-Yugoslavian border question was not settled until 1975, with the Treaty of Osimo. Today the relations between these two countries are somewhat better than simple good neighborliness.

However, the mere fact that there are Nato tactical nuclear weapons in countries other than those of the central front is often forgotten. William Kaufmann, for example, recently proposed a force of 2,014 Tactical Nuclear Weapons (TNW) for the central region of Europe that "would require only about one-third of the current stockpile"(31). Since such a stockpile of 6,000 TNW is shown two pages earlier under the label "Nuclear Weapons in Europe, 1982", the author either forgot the Southern Flank, or implicitly implied the withdrawal of TNW from that region.

The presence of a tactical nuclear armory is even more overlooked when it comes to Italy in particular: a nuclear-free strip has been proposed for the Central Front (32); nuclear-free zones proposals have been made for the Northern countries and the Balkans (33). Two states - neutral Austria and non-aligned Yugoslavia - provide a buffer zone between Italian and Warsaw Pact forces; this can partly explain the exclusion of Italy from current discussions about the nuclear-free zones in Europe.

The net result is, however, a kind of estrangement from the present Nato debate on the nuclear threshold. Italy is perceived mainly in terms of Cruise deployment - the small Sicilian town of Comiso is now known almost everywhere. Clearly the kind of attention this issue has received abroad reverberates in the Italian public, strengthening the tendency to focus, as far as nuclear issues are concerned, almost exclusively on the INF.

As in other European countries, the Italian press is accustomed to treating the problem of national capabilities to counter a WTO attack in terms of hours, rather than days. Then defeat would inevitably follow (34). Such a bleak picture is probably unfair. Apart from the sea (35), where would this attack come from?

It is commonly assumed that it would come from Hungary. The bulk of the Hungarian army consists, according to The Military Balance 1983-84, of one tank division and five motor rifle divisions. The tank division and two of the motor rifle divisions are supposed to be in category 2 (up to 50% of establishment strength), whereas three of the motor rifle divisions are cat.3 (little more than cadres). They have 1,200 tanks of 1950s vintage, with some 60 modern T-72s. The Hungarian Air Force has all of its 140 aircraft playing an interceptor role: 120 MIG-21s and 20 MIG-23s - even though John Erickson stated that the the Hungarian Air Force also has 30 SU-7MB attack aircraft (36).

Two Soviet tank divisions are deployed in Hungary, together with two motor rifle divisions; these four are all in cat.1. In case of mobilization - a move that would allow any opponent to take similar steps - six tank divisions (cat.2), four motor rifle divisions (cat.3) and one artillery division from the Soviet military district of Kiev might be added (37).

To reach the Italian border, these not very formidable forces would have to pass through Austria and/or Yugoslavia, where they would most probably meet fierce resistance in both cases. The remnants would finally meet the Italian forces. To begin with, the latter have some advantages: first, they know the terrain, and second, geography does not facilitate the attacker's task.

"The Gorizia Gap' is the only true access route from the East to the northern edge of the Mediterranean Basin and the Italian peninsula" (38). This more or less coincides with the Italo-Yugoslavian border, while the Alps are a natural barrier against an invasion coming from Austria. On the Alps, however, five Alpine brigades would be in their accustomed terrain.

Between Brescia, Padua and Bologna up to the Eastern border, 13 tank, armoured and Alpine brigades, the Army missile brigade and the bulk of anti-aircraft Army units are deployed: 130,000 troops - more than 2/3 of the field forces.

Between 1975 and 1982, Italian Armed forces manpower climbed from 455,000 to 505,000 (official Nato figures). The increase was centered on the Army, whose 24 brigades are now all around 100% of establishment strength. This result is due to an effort begun in 1975: field units are now almost all mechanized. More mobility has allowed the redeployment further to the rear for some units. Most likely, even the lack of physical space - the Gorizia Gap is 50 km wide - has led to the provision of flexibility in the forward defense concepts. Again in 1975, a ten year plan began for the purchase of new equipment for the three armed forces: as a result from that year until 1983, the defense budget showed an average annual increase of more than 3% in real terms - and an average yearly increase of funds for weapons procurement of more than 8% after inflation in the same period (39).

The Italian Army has the second highest number of artillery pieces in Nato Europe: 1,116; the FRG has around 1,200. Among these pieces are 164 FH-70s and 256 M-109/110s. Apart from the old M-47s, which have been practically phased out, the tank line has 920 Leopard 1s and 300 M-60A1s. Several thousand Milan ATGWs are on order, together with 60 A-129 anti-tank helicopters. The Air Force, with some 300 combat aircraft, has already some 50 Tornados - with another 50 on order. Also on order are 187 AM-X FGAs, which will replace the old G-91s.

There is no point in going much further with this analysis. It should be clear that any conflict is highly unpredictable: armies' standing performances in the real world are something quite different from a bean counting exercise. Nevertheless, such an exercise, to the extent it can be valid, should not leave room for much pessimism. This is largely recognized by the CASD's study quoted above, where it states: "Such a defense might be successful - obviously against an effort which is proportionate to the importance of the sector and to the possible goals of the aggressor - also without resorting to the tactical use of nuclear weapons, but it needs a defense against nuclear and chemical blackmail. That is only possible by deploying INF in Italy" (40).

It is worth noting here that the Italian military deem feasible a purely conventional defense with the current capabilities against a WTO conventional attack of realistic magnitude. Judgements by Italian military experts are similar. Silvestri wrote, with regard the North-Eastern theater: "The Warsaw Pact country that presents the most direct threat to this sector is Hungary, whose forces are anything but considerable. Thus, there are those who maintain that, while this sector should not be abandoned, the strategic concepts that make entire Italian defense policy rotate around it, to the detriment of other sectors and other threats, should be re-examined" (41). On his part, Maurizio Cremasco, after reviewing many elements (weaknesses of the Hungarian forces, high probability of a Yugoslav reaction, strongholds of Italian defense) pointed out: "In fact, an analysis of Warsaw Pact military exercises from 1970 to 1976 could lead to prove a hypothesis of a Warsaw Pact military planning which would exclude Italy's invasion" (42). Withdrawal of tactical nuclear weapons from Italy should therefore be possible. But which TNW and how many? The following table (see next page) is the author's estimate of the TNW stockpile deployed in Italy.

Likely candidates for a first withdrawal - sometime in the next five years to implement the Montebello decision (43) - seem to be the ADMSS and the Nike Hercules. Only the latter should be modernized, but most probably with a conventional system, the Patriot. As far as other systems are concerned; it is clearly a matter of choice: Tornados, Lances and US warplanes can be assigned to conventional missions, just as artillery pieces can, thereby enhancing the already good conventional prospects. Depth bombs and nuclear naval missions are

U.S. Tactical Nuclear Weapons in Europe

<u>Type</u>	<u>Europe</u>	<u>Italy</u>
Aerial bombs	1,735	140 (a)
Pershing 1	295	-
8-inch art. rnds.	935	40 (b)
155 mm. " "	735	- (b)
Lance	695	40 (c)
Honest John	200	-
Nike Hercules	690	96 (d)
<u>ADM</u>	<u>370</u>	<u>50 (e)</u>
 Total	 5,655	 366
 <u>Depth Bombs</u>	 <u>190</u>	 <u>60 (f)</u>
 Total	 5,845	 426

Sources: U.S. Defense Department (see The New York Times, November 15, 1983, where there was also a breakdown between warheads assigned to U.S. forces and those assigned to NATO forces). Figures on Italy are the author's estimates.

- (a) Italy has two groups assigned to nuclear missions (18 F-104s and 18 MRCA's). The assumption is some 20 nuclear bombs per group. In addition, the Aviano air base in Northern Italy hosts 1 to 2 rotational USAF F-16 groups from Torrejon air base in Spain. The assumption is that some 100 nuclear bombs are stored at that base.
- (b) There are 387 M-110s in Nato Europe with 430 nuclear shells, with little more than one warhead each. Italy has 36 M-110s. The assumption is therefore 40 warheads for Italy. The 190 155mm nuclear shells for Nato forces are assumed to be entirely deployed on the Central Region.
- (c) Italy has six Lance launchers. With 56 such launchers, Nato forces have 370 nuclear warheads: some 6 each. Here the assumption is some 40 warheads for Italy.
- (d) Assumption is one warhead for each system.
- (e) The assumption is about half of 370 ADMs stored in West Germany. Italy has slightly less than Greece and Turkey.
- (f) The assumption is about one third of the depth bombs assigned to the Mediterranean. Italy has some 14 ASW Breguet Atlantic aircraft at the Sigonella Air Base in Sicily - where rotational US Navy Orion P-3s are hosted as well.

clearly a more complicated issue, which is beyond the scope of this paper. Opposite trends should also be taken into account: Nato dual-capable artillery shows an upward trend in recent years (44). Moreover, the US is planning to increase the number of allied nuclear-certified howitzers in the 155mm category, which is the more numerous (45). Finally, ERW is still a possibility.

What is worth noting in this context is the existence of a distinct option. Given the fairly good conventional prospects in the North-Eastern theater, which seems to require neither dramatic manpower and equipment improvements, nor a wait for Emerging Technologies (ET) to emerge; given the trend within Nato, as far as Tactical Nuclear Weapons are concerned, a trend which seems to be at least one of de-emphasis, from the broad base calling for a raising of the nuclear threshold to the Montebello decision; and finally, given the Cruise missile deployment and its implications, whereby in military terms Nato will have a substantial nuclear capability in the Southern theatre anyway, and whereas in political terms, Italy played a key-role in carrying out the controversial 1979 decision. Given all this, Italy should be entitled to raise within the Alliance the question of a thorough Tactical Nuclear Weapons withdrawal from its soil as a step which is consistent with current Nato trends in this field.

Conclusions

Looking back to the recent past it is impossible not to note how many things have changed in the Italian security debate - of which the Nuclear Debate is only a part. Firstly, now all the main political forces accept the Atlantic Alliance as one of the main frameworks of Italy's foreign relations. The Communist evolution has been very similar to that of the Socialists in the early 1960s : the PCI now stresses the defensive and geographically limited scope of Nato. In addition to that, the Party nowadays puts much emphasis on European institutions and on the process of European integration. This has two important consequences: on one hand the EC - and to a lesser extent the WEU - gives the PCI an additional impulse to think in terms of Europe and European security, especially as long as the EC tends to increase its involvement in security matters; on the other hand the European dimension helps the Italian Communists to find points of reference in other European leftist forces. The impact this feature is having on PCI security policy is already visible in the attention the Party pays, for example, to the German SPD security debate.

Secondly, while this broader political base for the main aspects of Italian foreign policy is developing, there are signs that other changes can affect those aspect themselves - clearly reshuffling everything. The then Foreign Minister Giuseppe Pella, stated in the 1959 IRMI debate that Italian foreign policy had three main frameworks in the following order: The UN, Nato and the European integration process (46). The peacekeeping missions which Italy recently undertook outside the UN framework have been a cause of friction with the Communists - although their opposition was again rather soft. Generally it can be said that the PCI is much less ready than the other main Italian political forces to downplay the UN role. Moreover, as already observed, these missions have epitomized - at least in the public's mind - a certain emphasis on an Italian military role in the Mediterranean, this time even outside the Nato framework. Again the Communists seem to have no intention of following this tendency. Here, however, lays a dilemma for the future, which is more a paradox than a dilemma: in the coming years the PCI could in a sense present itself as the political force most loyal to the traditional avenues of the country's postwar foreign policy, right at the time when the other main parties revise their stance. In any case, the point here is that consensus may soon re-emerge as something to be achieved.

Emphasis on the Mediterranean - an old pole of attraction in Italy's international affairs - is also having the consequence of reducing the attention paid to the North-Eastern theater, where there are the bulk of nuclear weapons deployed in Italy. Therefore, this shift in attention risks adding to the lack of knowledge throughout the country on nuclear-related security problems, removing Italy further from those issues - like the nuclear threshold - vividly debated in Nato. Italy's options in this field are also overlooked and could even be lost.

Thirdly, the institutional framework which protected security decision-making when consensus on these issues was lacking, may become a stumbling block now that consensus has been achieved. Although there is still a long way to go in terms of awareness of security problems, the public, the media and - above all - the politicians have much more reason to be informed than only few years ago. With regard to the Parliament, for example, the budget discussion is an increasingly complex task: its volume is now remarkable, while behind it there is now an Italian arms industry - which according to SIPRI is the fourth largest exporter of major weapons systems to the third world. Furthermore, it is no longer possible to discuss the budget with no mention of the forces' missions and of the country defense policy. Pressure is mounting in the Parliament to change course and the 1985 White Book on Defense is a sort of response on the part of the Government. A thorough review of this recent document is beyond the scope of the paper. What can be said here is that it certainly represents a step ahead, although it still has several shortcomings, especially as far as nuclear weapons are concerned.

In this regard the INF debate has really made a difference: it cannot be said anymore - as did the Government in 1959 - that a new nuclear deployment in Italy is simply something in accordance with art.3 of the Atlantic Treaty. More importantly, allied decision-making has also changed: in 1979 the national Parliaments were asked to support the INF decision. Clearly these procedures require more knowledge by the legislative bodies, in Italy as elsewhere. A revision of the institutional framework, giving more weight to the role of the parliament, is badly needed. Being a major reform, though, it would involve a long and complex process. In the meantime, however, the Government could improve the current state of affairs by its own initiative, lifting for example the more anachronistic secrecy barriers surrounding defense affairs in Italy.

Fourthly, if this new consensus is seeking a better understanding of the allied mechanism, then this is especially true as far as nuclear weapons are concerned. Repeated claims by both Mr. Lagorio and Mr. Spadolini that Italy has control over GLCMs - a sort of dual key arrangement - were met with strong skepticism (47). Here the Government seems definitely reluctant to face a public debate on the consultation process in the alliance and on the authorization for the use of nuclear weapons, preferring vague or even incorrect statements. Almost no one today would use the issue of control over nuclear weapons to advocate a national nuclear arsenal, even though the issue as such is recurrent in Italy (48) ever since the 1959 Jupiters debate. What is needed is simply a more mature discussion about benefits on one hand, and the limits on sovereignty on the other, that a nation has in joining an alliance. Both of them, however, must be stated and debated.

In 1979 the main Italian political forces were caught by surprise, and began to debate only when the deadline of the Nato decision was very close. Obviously the country's contribution to its making could only have been rather poor. Accordingly, there seems to have emerged a kind of pattern of behavior: while Italy's role can be decisive in supporting allied policy, the country still lacks the ability to influence the allied decision-making process.

Filling this gap is the challenge Italian foreign policy faces for the years to come.

FOOTNOTES

- (1) Noting that from the beginning of the '80s, "considerable public attention has been given to the interrelationship between conventional and nuclear forces", Catherine McArdle Kelleher discussed at length the concept of nuclear threshold in Thresholds and Theologies: The Need for Critical Reassessment, "Survival", July-August 1984. The concept's success is probably due to its usefulness as a common denominator to several issues of Nato's defense: conventional capabilities, the role of battlefield nuclear weapons, no-first-use, escalation and so on. Accordingly, this essay will highlight the role of the concept of nuclear threshold in Italy's post-INF nuclear debate.
- (2) Discussion on "Star Wars" has just started in Italy. It is therefore too early either to assess its impact or to predict its outcome. However, the substantial flow of articles that have already appeared in the Italian press is another sign of the country's greater attention towards nuclear issues.
- (3) Italian Army's doctrines are designated by a number in the range of hundreds: the "600" was superseded by the "700", the "700" by the "800" and so on.
- (4) See Senato della Repubblica, III Legislatura, 98^a Seduta, 14 Aprile 1959, Assemblea, Resoconto Stenografico, p.4650. Sen. Caleffi quoted, on that occasion, an A. P. Report.
- (5) See "Il Tempo" and "Il Giorno", April 5 1959. Liuzzi, reportedly, saw a lack in American guarantees. Probably he would have liked Italian ownership of the Jupiters' warheads.
- (6) Foreign Minister Giuseppe Pella to the Chamber of Deputies' Foreign Affairs Committee, as quoted by "Corriere della Sera", April 11 1959.
- (7) Prime Minister Antonio Segni to the Senate. Senato della Repubblica etc., op. cit., 16 Aprile 1959, p.4824.
- (8) Foreign Minister Giuseppe Pella to the Senate. Ibid, p.4820.
- (9) Stefano Silvestri, The Left and Security Problems in Italy, France and Spain, in William E. Griffith (ed), "The European Left: Italy, France and Spain", Lexington Books, Lexington MA, 1977, p.148.
- (10) Senator Lussu to the Senate. Senato della Repubblica etc., op.cit., p.4659.
- (11) Towards the end of the 50s, Italy decided to equip the Navy Cruiser Giuseppe Garibaldi with Polaris missile launchers. Later abandoned, this move even anticipated the M.F. proposal. Similar to the IRBM case, it is probable that the military leadership of the time envisaged - and called for - a national nuclear deterrent, more or less coordinated with the US one.
- (12) N. Pasti, I Problemi delle Forze Armate Italiane, "Bell'agor", Settembre 1969, quoted in Enea Cerquetti, La Forze Armate Italiane dal 1945 al 1975, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1975, p. 242.
- (13) Paul Buteux, The Politics of Nuclear Consultation in Nato 1965-1980, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp.87-88.
- (14) The International School on Disarmament and Research on Conflicts (ISODARCO) is organized by the Italian Pugwash Group. Every two years it holds a ten-day seminar on arms control with the participation of several qualified foreign experts.

- (15) There are no courses on security in any of the Italian state universities - which account for the overwhelming majority of the academic institutes.
- (16) See Maurizio Cremasco, Il Problema degli Euromissili nel Dibattito Politico Italiano, unpublished paper, IAI, Rome, 1984. P2s and GLCMs have been seen mostly as a counterweight to SS-20s, not only in Italy. In this regard Saceur Gen. Rogers said: "Most people believe it was because of the SS-20 that we have modernized. We would have modernized irrespective of the SS-20 because we had this gap in our spectrum of defense developing and we needed to close that gap". United States Senate, Hearings before the Committee on Armed Services, 98th Congress, 1st Session on DoD Authorization for FY 1984, Part 5, p.2372.
- (17) Stefano Silvestri, The Left etc., op.cit. p.150.
- (18) David N.Schwartz, Nato's Nuclear Dilemmas, The Brookings Institution, Washington D.C., 1983, p. 230.
- (19) See M. Cremasco, Il Problema etc., op.cit.
- (20) Another requirement put forward by the FRG was "simultaneity", i.e. the INF deployment was to occur at the same moment, in Germany and at least one other European continental country as well. The Italian base chosen for the Tomahawks was Comiso, but it could not be available, for technical reasons, before March 1984. In order not to postpone the whole INF initial deployment, Nato decided to "park" the first GLCM squadron in Sigonella - not far from Comiso, however - from November 1983 thru March 1984. It was a pointless decision from a military perspective, which made sense only for the sake of simultaneity.
- (21) L.Reychler, R.Rudney (eds), Leuven University Press, Leuven 1985.
- (22) Lelio Lagorio, Indirizzi di Politica Militare, Ministero della Difesa, Roma 1980, p.11.
- (23) See Mozes W.A. Weers, The Nuclear Debate in the Netherlands, "Strategic Review", Spring 1981.
- (24) See Bartolo Ciccardini, L'Italia deve avere una sua atomica o può fidarsi degli 'ombrelli' altrui?, "Il Tempo", 30 agosto 1982.
- (25) Manfredi Bosco, Un confronto metodico sui problemi delle F.A., "Il Popolo", 13 marzo 1983.
- (26) Luciana Castellina, La scommessa della pace, "La Repubblica", 11 agosto 1984.
- (27) Aldo D'aleccio, Nucleare e Difesa Europea, in CESPI, CRS, Istituto Gramsci, Atti del Convegno su "Culture e Strategie del Pacifismo", Milano 6-7 aprile 1984.
- (28) Vincenzo Tornetta, La strategia nucleare dell'alleanza atlantica e il principio del non-primo-uso, "Notizie Nato", ottobre 1982.
- (29) CASD, Il concetto strategico dell'alleanza atlantica per gli anni '90 alla luce della possibile evoluzione della dottrina della risposta flessibile, Roma, giugno 1983.
- (30) With the possible exception of some nuclear role for Italian ASW forces.
- (31) William W.Kaufman, Nuclear Deterrence in Central Europe, in Steinbruner and Sigal (eds), op.cit., p.41.
- (32) See The Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues, Common Security, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1982, pp. 146-49.
- (33) See Sverre Lodgaard, Marek Thee (eds), Nuclear Disengagement in Europe, London, Taylor and Francis, 1983.
- (34) "Italy. With regard to the Southern Flank, air and land Warsaw Pact superiority is not even questioned". Francesco Gui, Terza ipotesi: la resa, "Panorama", 19 marzo 1984.

- (35) "Hypotesis of large-scale amphibious landings or paratroops operations in the heart of the peninsula are absoluteley unimaginable". Speech of Gen. Umberto Cappuzzo, Army Chief of Staff, at CASD, May 21 1982.
- (36) Quoted in S.Silvestri, M.Cremasco, Il fianco sud della Nato, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1980, footnote n.8, p.78.
- (37) Soviet divisions from Kiev Military District are from IISS, The Military Balance, 1983-84. Their level of readiness is from David C. Isby, Weapons and Tactics of the Soviet Army, Jane's Publishing Co., London and New York, 1981, p.27.
- (38) Gen. Giorgio Donati, The Defence of North-East Italy, "Nato's Sixteen Nations", May-June 1983.
- (39) See Marco De Andreis, Le armi della Repubblica, Milano, Gammalibri, 1983, pp.29-38 and p.69.
- (40) CASD, Il concetto etc., op.cit., pp. 134-35.
- (41) Stefano Silvestri, The Italian Paradox: Consensus amid Instability, in Gregory Flynn (ed), "The Internal Fabric of Western Security", Croom Helm, London, 1981, p.148..
- (42) Maurizio Cremasco, Situazione internazionale nell'area mediterranea e problematica del modello di difesa 'italiano', in ISTRID, "Gli indirizzi della difesa italiana", Roma, 1982, p.113.
- (43) In October 1983, at the Nuclear Planning Group meeting in Montebello, Canada, 14 Defense Ministers of Nato decided to withdraw 1,400 nuclear warheads from Europe in the next five years.
- (44) In 1981, Nato and US Forces in Europe had 258 M-110s, 1,654 M-109s and 319 FH-70s. Two years later there were 587 M-110s, 1,740 M-109s, 561 FH-70s. See IISS, The Military Balance, 1981-82 and 1983-84.
- (45) "Most 8-inch units are currently certified for nuclear rounds, as are (deleted) percent of the 155mm howitzer units; this percentage is expected to rise somewhat with the fielding of the new 155mm AFAP and a new family of Nato 155mm howitzers. These larger numbers of 155mm nuclear capable artillery pieces would help assure the survival of a substantial short-range nuclear capability in the event of a Warsaw Pact conventional attack or nuclear strike. A broadly based 155mm nuclear capability prevents the Pact from focussing its attacks on the less numerous 8-inch artillery (deleted)". FY 1984, Arms Control Impact Statements, 98th Congress, 1st Session, GPO, Washington D.C., April 1983, pp. 187-88.
- (46) See Senato della Repubblica, cit., 16 Aprile 1959, p.4817.
- (47) See "Il Manifesto", April 8 and May 16 1984. On April 4 1984, Mr.Spadolini declared to the Chamber of Deputies: "The Government can solemnly make sure that no nuclear weapon can ever be launched from the national territory without the adoption of the relevant decision by the Italian Government".
- (48) See Pietro Ingrao, Riarmo, sovranità, democrazia, in "Rinascita", December 9 1983.

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